

[METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR CONTROLLING AND RECEIVING DATA FROM CONNECTED DEVICES]

Abstract of Disclosure

In accordance with the present invention, one or more devices are connected to a set-top box that is coupled to a television screen or other output device. A GUI is provided which allows a user to easily control the connected device by sending them control signals. The control signals cause the connected device to enter a new state. For instance if the connected device is a light and the light is off, the new state is on. In one embodiment the user accesses the GUI and defines events and rules associated with one of the connected devices. The set-top box in conjunction with the connected device then determines if the defined event has occurred. If it has, the rules are applied to the device and the device performs some action. In another embodiment, a portion of the device's action sends data to the GUI and provides some form of output to the user.

Figures